

Grasses, Scotch Broom, Pine Trees Combine to Check Wind Erosion on Oregon Coast

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To the uninitiated, Surf Pines, Oregon, is merely a sideroad sign approximately two miles north of Gearhart, on the northern Oregon coast. There is no real reason for the tourist to make the turn into Surf Pines, and the residents of this beach community prefer that it remain undiscovered.

Now, Surf Pines is planted with over half a million pine trees and Scotch broom. It has $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of ocean frontage and a spectacular view of the Pacific from the North Jetty of the Columbia to Tillamook Light. There are over four miles of black top and oiled roads, two complete water systems, and this year a new section was opened which is thought to be the first on the Oregon coast to have all utilities underground.

In the spring Surf Pines puts on its Easter Bonnet, a glittering display of over 100,000 daffodils in full bloom as if nature with a gay, yellow paintbrush had run berserk among the green pines.

Deer Feel Safe

The deer, estimated at over 200, through some secret communication system of their own have long since learned that Surf Pines is a game refuge.

But Surf Pines wasn't always this way. In 1935, Clatsop County and this particular stretch of beach was a doomed land. A 15-mile strip of ocean frontage had been turned into a moving



Group of University of Oregon freshman girls, left to right, Kathy Steuver, Patty Lucas, Barbara Kendall and Ann Babson, pose in the Holland grass that now anchors the once wind-driven sand that threatened the Surf Pines area. Reclamation project has made area, once a worthless stretch of shifting dunes, into one of state's finest beach developments.

mass of blowing sand that was inexorably moving inland from the ocean. Each year as the winter storms howling out of the southwest, billions of yards of sand were picked up and moved inland like some tremendous sand glacier.

The experts had said that the situation was hopeless, but it was not, because in 1935 one of

the first of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's projects was the Civilian Conservation Corps. Hundreds of thousands of young men were moved into CCC camps all over the country to fight fire, build trails, control floods, and, in the case of Clatsop County, to control the shifting sands. The first few years saw very little prog-

ress as there was no proven method of controlling the tremendous force of sou'wester storms blowing as high as 75 miles an hour in gusts and moving everything that wasn't tied down.

Ray of Hope Enters

A ray of hope finally entered the picture when it was discov-

ered that Holland grass, imported from Holland, and Sea Lime grass thrived in moving sands. After that, it was a matter of manpower and time. The grasses flourished. Once established, Scotch broom and pine trees were planted to further confound the winds, and Surf Pines was born.

This soil conservation program ground to a halt overnight with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The CCC went out of existence as suddenly as it was born.

A planting program was maintained throughout the war years by the state of Oregon. In patches where the wind was victorious, pine trees and Scotch broom, Holland grass and sea lime were brought up from the rear and planted in the front line.

The land, reclaimed, began to fight back. Pasture grasses crept back. Game, which had fled the shifting sands, poked into the area. Small winter lakes, ideal breeding grounds for ducks, re-established themselves.

Developer Buys Land

In the fall of 1945, Howard Leighton, then postmaster of Seaside, and a realtor when he wasn't overseeing the delivery of mail, offered Barney Lucas, a developer of coast property, an 80-acre tract in the dunes area.

Lucas bought first and looked afterward. When he did look, certain flaws were apparent. In the first place, the 80 acres were too small a parcel to de-



"Before" picture shows Surf Pines area in 1937 at start of reclamation project. Wind and sand had gouged gaps, allowing sand to invade and cover lush meadow land, fill lakes and threaten resorts. Sand was crossing neck of land, piling into the Columbia River, threatening navigation.

velop as the cost of bringing utilities to the tract would be prohibitive. In addition, the amount of work necessary to develop the area would be wasted on such a small piece of ground.

Lucas began to buy land in the immediate area from any and all who would sell.

From 1945 to 1950, with the cooperation of the Oregon State Soil Conservation program and with the assistance of its di-

rector in Clatsop County, Bryson Lausch, he planted the half a million pine trees.

In 1950, the area was formally baptized Surf Pines and Surf Pines is literally what it says it is. Below and to the west, the Oregon surf rolls in, the winds, which in the winter knock the tops off the waves, and which used to threaten destruction to Surf Pines, now move through the pines harm-

lessly. The deer tiptoe through

the pines; upland birds nest in the pines, the clam diggers wade out into the surf to dig in the best clamming beach on the coast.

Surf Pines, now fully reclaimed, is a fully developed beach community recognized as the finest development of its kind on the Oregon Coast.

Center Sponsors Forum on Law

The adult education and activities committee of the Jewish Community Center will sponsor an open forum dealing with common legal problems confronting the average citizen at the center Thursday at 8:30 p.m. Wills and guardianship, real estate, insurance and other related problems will be covered.

Circuit Judge Eugene K. Oppenheimer will be moderator. Circuit Judge Paul Harris will discuss legal problems growing out of injuries and accidents. Judge William Dickson, of the Multnomah County Circuit Court, will discuss wills, estates and guardianships. Theodore Jensen, attorney, will talk about real estate. A question-discussion period will follow the formal panel presentation.

The forum will be presented as a public service and will be open to the community without charge.